

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Financial Overview

The Fiscal Year 2012 House Ways and Means Committee recommendations for the Commonwealth's operating budget include appropriations totaling \$30.5B. These expenditures are based on a tax revenue estimate of \$20.525B for Fiscal Year 2012, representing growth of \$741M above projected current year collections. In addition to tax revenue, nearly \$12.6B will be available from fees, federal reimbursements, and operating transfers. Within Massachusetts and across the country slow but persistent signs of economic recovery have begun to take hold; however, many difficult decisions remain as revenues are still below pre-recession levels. These budget recommendations balance the preservation of necessary government programs and services with limited resources to create a sustainable financial plan for the Commonwealth.

Despite the economic rebound and subsequent escalation in tax revenues the Committee was forced to make tough choices to develop a balanced budget in the face of losing \$1.5B in federal stimulus funds. In the last three fiscal years the Commonwealth has been able to buffer cuts to integral programs and services by replacing lost state funds with additional support from the federal government totaling \$4.4B. In Fiscal Year 2012 these revenues are no longer available and the House Ways and Means Committee had to devise a sustainable budget plan that provided adequate support for important programs and services.

	FY10 Collected	FY11 Estimated	FY12 Consensus Revenue	Variance
Total Tax Estimate	18,538	19,784	20,525	741
Dedicated Tax Revenue*	2,735	2,853	2,938	85
Total Taxes Available	15,803	16,931	17,587	656

*Transfers to the MBTA, SMART, and PRIT Funds

In recent years budget writers have implemented severe budget reductions, relied on federal stimulus funds, implemented reforms and efficiencies, and utilized reserves to continue core government functions throughout the recession. The House Ways and Means Committee's budget proposal uses modest reserve funds to avert program eliminations and layoffs. To offset this withdrawal the Committee has adopted proposals to limit the Commonwealth's reliance on non-recurring revenues with two new policies. First, the Committee adopts a proposal to deposit all tax settlements above \$10M into the Stabilization Fund, and second capping year to year abandoned property proceeds above 125% of the previous Fiscal Year. These efforts coupled with the continuation of the capital gains reform will prevent volatile revenue sources from being added to the budgeted revenue base going forward.

The amount of funding allocated to programs addresses areas of mandatory growth, provides services for the Commonwealth's most vulnerable citizens through various health and human services programs, supports education, remains dedicated to the issue of public safety, commits funding for economic development and job growth, provides funding to address the pressing homelessness situation and continuation of support for energy and environment programs. The budget proposal contained in this document provides a path for the Commonwealth to grow sustainably while pushing to more effectively use finite resources to provide residents of Massachusetts with the core government services.

Local Aid

The House Ways and Means Committee values the critical role that local government plays in the lives of the citizens of the Commonwealth. Local aid funding from the Commonwealth is vital to municipalities' operations and ability to provide basic services to their residents. The exhaustion of federal stimulus dollars has led the Committee to make the difficult choice to reduce unrestricted general government aid by \$65M.

Aware of the burden this will place on communities, the Committee has made other important investments in local aid that will offset this reduction in funding. This budget provides a \$120M increase to Chapter 70 funding. This increase provides enough funding to level fund every school district in the Commonwealth and provide enough foundation aid to keep every district at foundation levels of spending, which has always been and still remains the heart of the formula.

The Committee also supports the cost saving efficiencies that can be realized through regionalization. Though the cost outlay for regionalization can be expensive, the long-term savings for cities and towns can offset initial costs. To assist with the initial expenditures this Committee has made a commitment to regionalization by setting up a \$9.7M grant program to help defray these costs.

- Increased Chapter 70 to \$3.99B.
- Level funded regional school transportation.
- Level funded payments-in-lieu of taxes.
- Level funded aid to municipal public libraries.
- Provided funding for a \$9.7M regionalization grant program.

Board of Library Commissioners

The House Ways and Means Committee made a concerted effort to shelter our local libraries from further cuts. In past budget years we have made significant, yet targeted reductions to our public library system with the aim of gaining efficiencies without losing service. In the spirit of regionalization this budget includes increasing aid to regional public libraries by \$350K. All other library accounts, including the local aid to public libraries, library technology, and the talking book programs have been level funded at the Fiscal Year 2011 amount. This proposal for library funding is a responsible effort to maintain our commitment without increasing funding beyond our financial means.

- Increased funding for regional public libraries by \$350K.
- Level funded talking book programs.
- Level funded local aid to public libraries.

K-12 Education

In order to maintain our place atop national educational rankings we must continue to invest in education regardless of our fiscal plight. Over the past three fiscal years, federal stimulus dollars have shielded us from the most egregious cuts to our K-12 education system. With federal stimulus dollars no longer available in Fiscal Year 2012, the House Ways and Means Committee has committed to filling that gap and continuing our record of strong investment in education.

It is clear that Chapter 70 and Special Education Circuit Breaker are two of the most crucial programs in education funding. In line with these priorities, this Committee funds Chapter 70 at \$3.99B, a \$120M increase over Fiscal Year 2011. This funding level provides level funding for foundation aid in Chapter 70 for all municipalities of the Commonwealth.

Additionally, the Committee understands the impact that special education costs have on school budgets. As with Chapter 70, federal stimulus dollars for special education are all but exhausted. For this reason, the Committee has invested an additional \$80M in state dollars for the Special Education Circuit Breaker. This increase will provide roughly a 70% net claims reimbursement rate, up from 40% in Fiscal Year 2011.

This budget also maintains systems in place to enhance educator quality through professional development and training. Our commitment to improving teacher quality is demonstrated by maintaining

our funding for math and science content-based professional development, and for English Language Acquisition professional development. We also are committed to promoting strong literacy in schools. This budget maintains funding for the Commissioner's literacy programs line item, as well as for innovative literacy programs such as the Bay State Reading Institute and Reading Recovery.

Overall, the Committee has made targeted education investments and maintained funding for important core services provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. We believe that this budget will continue to provide our children with the education that Massachusetts citizens have come to expect from our public schools.

- Increased Chapter 70 funding by \$120M.
- Increased Special Education Circuit Breaker by \$80M.
- Level funded regional school transportation reimbursements.
- Level funded kindergarten expansion grants.
- Level funded adult basic education.
- Level funded extended learning time grants.
- Level funded targeted intervention at at-risk schools.

Early Education and Care

Quality education in the pre-kindergarten ages is important to ensure that children are prepared when they reach grade-school level. Even with the fiscal constraints placed on us by economic realities, this budget attempts to ensure we continue in the direction of providing every child with a quality education before kindergarten.

We affirm our commitment to helping families with the difficult task of finding child care that is of high quality and affordable. The Committee supports affordable access to early education and child care services and has provided the largest appropriation ever for the income-eligible child care account. This budget also will cover all mandated child care obligations, including for children with open abuse and neglect cases in the Department of Children and Families, and families who receive or recently received transitional assistance.

In addition to supporting access, the Committee combines funding from two coordinated family and community engagement grant line items into one line item and level funds the account. This budget provides level funding for head start and universal pre-kindergarten grants. We have also included a separate line item for the successful early literacy program, Reach Out and Read. These investments, along with our investments in child care, will serve as a strong base for many children in the Commonwealth as they enter our public school system.

- Level funded EEC regional administration.
- Fully funded child care for children with open abuse cases with DCF.
- Fully funded child care for children who receive or recently received transitional assistance.
- Increased income-eligible child care.
- Level funded universal pre-kindergarten.
- Level funded grants to head start programs.

Higher Education

The Committee understands the important role that our public institutes of higher education play in our overall education system by providing high-quality, low-cost education to citizens of the Commonwealth. The loss of federal stimulus dollars will require strong fiscal planning on the part of the institutions. To help with this planning, we have implemented out-of-state tuition retention for all campuses. In trying to fill our budget gap, the Committee made a commitment to maintain the level of state funding equal to that of Fiscal Year 2011. We feel that this level of funding will provide a solid base to our state college appropriations as we recover from the recession and can begin providing more funding to this important aspect of our education system.

This budget also maintains funding for other important appropriations administered by the Board of Higher Education with a specific focus on preparing individuals to join the workforce. This Committee maintains level funding for the Nursing Initiative, which is a vital cog in connecting our nursing students with hospitals. This budget also maintains level funding for Community College Workforce Development grants.

- Level funded state dollars for institutes of higher education.
- Level funded community college workforce development grants.
- Level funded foster care financial aid and foster and adopted child fee waivers.
- Level funded the state scholarship program.

Judiciary

The Committee recognizes the importance of the judicial branch and their mission to provide a fair and efficient judicial system, with equal access to justice for every citizen in the Commonwealth. While budgetary constraints necessitate heightened fiscal scrutiny, the Committee believes the integrity of the judicial system in the Commonwealth must be upheld and justice delivered. The proposed budget continues to support the state's constitutional obligation to provide counsel for indigent clients as well as civil legal aid for adults and children with mental disabilities. The Committee recognizes the increased need for legal assistance in these difficult fiscal times and consequently has provided necessary funding in these areas.

- Provided level funding for the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation to continue civil legal aid in the Commonwealth at \$9.5M.
- Provided level funding for the Mental Health Legal Advisors to continue to provide legal assistance to adults and children with mental disabilities at \$781K.
- Provided \$151M for Committee for Public Counsel Services and continued reforms to provide indigent representation in a more cost-effective manner by being less reliant on private bar advocates.
- Provided \$7.4M for the Supreme Judicial Court.
- Provided \$10.5M for the Appeals Court.

State Administration

State administrative offices are charged with maintaining the Commonwealth's cash-flow, overseeing revenue collections, providing health insurance for municipal and state employees, and representing the Commonwealth's legal interests. In developing its budget recommendations the House Ways and Means Committee carefully reviewed each line item and closely analyzed the policies and budgets for these entities to encourage savings while maintaining services and programs provided by these offices.

- Level funded underground storage tank oil spill cleanup reimbursements.
- Fully funded tax abatements for veterans, widows, blind persons and the elderly.
- Level funded reimbursement to cities in lieu of taxes on state owned land.
- Fully funded the Commonwealth's share of employee insurance premiums through the GIC, which is taking responsibility for new members, including sheriffs, National Guard Quartermasters, municipalities, and transportation authorities.
- Held harmless state employees' share of health insurance premiums through the GIC.

Transportation

The House Ways and Means Committee's Fiscal Year 2012 budget recommendations build on efficiencies and cost saving opportunities created by the passage of the transportation reform package of 2009. The Committee has prioritized funding public transit services as well as infrastructure developments that affect millions of residents in the Commonwealth each day. Significant investments continue to be made towards implementing the statewide transportation strategic plan with an emphasis

on safety, customer service, and system development. The Fiscal Year 2012 budget makes further advancements in transparency by utilizing dedicated revenues to isolate transportation spending in the State's operating budget.

The Committee authorizes over \$363M in additional funding for vital services to the Massachusetts Transportation Trust Fund and the regional transportation agencies, including the MBTA. In addition to MassDOT operations, the Fiscal Year 2012 budget fully funds the debt service obligations for transportation infrastructure development, maintenance, and repair. This budget preserves current public transportation services and brings MassDOT closer to its goal of self sufficiency.

- Fully funded contract assistance payments for the accelerated bridge program, central artery, Route 3, and Massachusetts Turnpike Authority.
- Provided the MBTA with \$160M in additional assistance generated through the recently enacted sales tax increase.
- Provided the Regional Transportation Authority with an additional \$15M for contract assistance.
- Further integrated oversight and funding of the Merit Rating Board to MassDOT.

Energy and Environment

Massachusetts is fortunate to have a rich, diverse ecosystem and a robust network of municipal facilities that connect the residents of the Commonwealth with our natural resources. The Committee recognizes that in this difficult economic climate it is important to prioritize services that directly impact the health and safety of Massachusetts residents, as well as recreational opportunities that are utilized year round. This budget makes a specific effort to maintain services at municipal beaches, pools, and other facilities popular during the summer months, and to preserve the \$11.5 million in funding for the Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program. Funding has also been maintained for the essential programs run by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to preserve the clean air, water, and landscape of the Commonwealth.

- Provided \$5.5M for the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for guidance and oversight of the Commonwealth's natural resources.
- Fully funded operations and included language to keep municipal pools open from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
- Provided funding for 12M meals to Massachusetts Regional Food Banks.
- Provided \$7.6M for the Department of Public Utilities to protect Massachusetts consumers from unfair utility costs, ensure reliable service, and plan responsible growth of the utility grid.

Health and Human Services

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) is tasked with providing critical services to some of the Commonwealth's most vulnerable populations. These services include providing a safety net for needy families, supporting our country's veterans, protecting disabled citizens, caring for the youth of our state, and ensuring senior citizens receive sufficient health care. The services provided by EOHHS are varied as well as integral to the well-being of many residents of the Commonwealth. Despite improved fiscal conditions many difficult decisions are reflected in these recommendations which aim to intersect sustainable budgeting with the value of the services provided by EOHHS.

Health Care

Through the passage of the federal healthcare reform law and the fiscal constraints of recent years the Committee has maintained its commitment to ensuring every resident of the Commonwealth has access to affordable, quality healthcare. Continued growth in healthcare costs, along with sustained high unemployment has forced policy-makers to examine services provided and the underlying assumptions driving healthcare expenditures. This budget continues our commitment to health services for low income individuals without access to employer sponsored insurance through funding the Commonwealth Care

Trust Fund. This Committee also remains dedicated to the 1.3M MassHealth enrollees, who have no other health care options as a result of the high unemployment rate brought on by the recent recession.

- Provided \$10.3B for MassHealth programs. This is an additional \$151M above estimated Fiscal Year 2011 spending to fund a 4.6% increase in enrollment.
- Adopted \$798M in gross savings ranging from rate reductions, increased co-pays from members, re-procurement of services and stronger program integrity measures aimed at reducing health care spending.
- Provided \$500K to leverage \$50M in federal funds to help healthcare providers implement meaningful use of health information technology.
- Provided \$822M to fund Commonwealth Care coverage for 160,000 members in Fiscal Year 2012.
- Adopted administrative changes necessary to allow the Connector to re-procure the direct coverage portion of the Medical Security Plan (MSP).

Department of Youth Services

The Department of Youth Services strives to promote positive change for troubled youth by partnering with communities, families, and other government programs. This budget proposal supports the department's efforts to positively influence committed youth and to encourage education and skill development by investing in counseling services, safe living environments, and enhanced salaries for teachers within DYS. As the juvenile justice agency in Massachusetts, DYS will continue to operate effective programs to protect the public and discourage youth crime.

- Provided \$21.5M for community-based services for youth in nonresidential care.
- Provided level funding for pre-trial programs for youth awaiting trial at \$18.3M.
- Provided level funding for secure facilities to keep troubled youth off the streets at \$96.4M.
- Provided level funding for teacher enhanced salaries to bring their salaries more in line with their public school counterparts at \$2.5M.

Department of Children and Families

Although the Committee has made many difficult decisions, the Department of Children and Families' programs for family preservation maintain their significance in the Committee's budget recommendations. The Committee values the importance of their work to ensure the safety of children throughout the Commonwealth. This budget recognizes the significance of this goal through the designation of \$39.5M in funding for family support and stabilization services. The Committee also provides funding for residential, adoption, foster care, and guardianship services to protect children from abuse and neglect and maintains funding for alternative care placements for children and adolescents within the community.

- Provided \$242.5M for services for children and families.
- Provided \$192.4M for congregate care services.
- Maintained funds for social workers and case management, totaling \$159.5M.
- Provided level funding for the Sexual Abuse Intervention Network at \$698K.

Transitional Assistance

Low income individuals and families in the Commonwealth are often the most adversely affected during times of economic recession. The Committee remains committed to protecting vital services for the State's most vulnerable populations by maintaining eligibility and benefits for cash assistance, food assistance, and employment services and training. Benefit programs administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance are a critical step towards self-sufficiency and independence for many Massachusetts residents. This budget preserves these important programs on behalf of the Commonwealth's underserved population and stimulates the economy by bringing more federal dollars in to the State's retail and non-profit industries.

The House Ways and Means Committee budget makes a special effort to preserve funding for educational supports for young parents and other recipients of state benefit programs with the greatest need for assistance. In Fiscal Year 2012 the Commonwealth will continue to implement and fund the cash benefit programs for families, children, the elderly, disabled, and other populations who are struggling or are in need of support as a result of the economic recession.

- Provided \$313M for TAFDC grant payments to provide cash assistance to eligible families with dependent children.
- Provided \$225M for the Commonwealth's portion of the supplemental security income cash assistance benefit.
- Provided a supplemental \$2.9M for food stamp participation rate programs to reduce and eventually eliminate hunger in Massachusetts.
- Provided \$89M for emergency aid to the elderly, disabled and children.
- Level funded the Young Parents Program to provide educational support and parenting training to young parents across Massachusetts.

Department of Mental Health

Massachusetts is nationally respected as a leader in mental health treatment and services. The Department of Mental Health provides residential, clinical, vocational and rehabilitation services to members of the community suffering from chronic mental illness. In an effort to maintain the exemplary level of services to residents in need of assistance, this Committee makes a significant investment in addressing these needs. The Fiscal Year 2012 House Ways and Means budget appropriates over \$613M to the Department of Mental Health to serve approximately 27K residents.

- Provided over \$71M in funding for child and adolescent mental health services.
- Provided over \$323M in funding for adult community mental health services.

Department of Developmental Services

The Department of Developmental Services is committed to enhancing the lives of those with intellectual disabilities by facilitating engagement in their communities. The House Ways and Means Committee is dedicated to supporting the department's efforts to administer daily activity and employment services, family respite support, transportation, case management and community-based and intensive residential services to over 32K developmentally disabled consumers. The Committee recommends appropriations totaling over \$1.3B for DDS in Fiscal Year 2012.

- Provided \$41M for adult family supports
- Provided \$751M for vendor operated residential and day community services
- Maintained funding for the agency's community transportation services and the turning 22 residential and day care services

Department of Public Health

In this proposal the Committee upholds its commitment to support disease prevention and health education services for the people of Massachusetts. Reaching out to youth and veterans, supporting local health in communities, and working toward improving the health of those in the Commonwealth remains a high priority. The department is dedicated to empowering residents and accomplishing quality health care for these individuals, particularly those who are most at risk for assorted and challenging health problems. This proposal continues the Committee's investment in the health of residents and in programs from substance abuse to domestic violence, and from universal immunization to the critical services provided by public health hospitals.

- Provided \$3.2M for sexual assault nurse examiners and pediatric SANE programs, which provide specialized care for both adult and child victims of sexual violence.

- Provided \$3.6M for suicide prevention and intervention programs, which serve Massachusetts residents, including youth and veterans.
- Provided \$31M for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and services to prevent the spread of HIV and develop health and support services needed to help individuals with HIV/AIDS live longer, healthier lives, serving approximately 350,000 people.
- Provided \$75.2M for substance abuse and substance abuse recovery services for community programs to support low-income individuals who would not otherwise receive treatment.
- Provided \$4.9M for domestic violence and sexual assault prevention and treatment, including rape crisis centers, refugee and immigrant programs, crisis hotlines, and GLBT outreach.
- Provided \$50M for universal immunization to prevent the occurrence of vaccine-preventable diseases through vaccination of all children and many high-risk adults in the Commonwealth.
- Provided \$1.5M for violence prevention grants to reduce the incidence of gang involvement and violence among at-risk youth populations.
- Provided \$788K for pediatric palliative care to meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of children with life-limiting illnesses and their families.

Elder Affairs

The Committee maintains its respect for and commitment to Massachusetts' many elders by supporting services that allow elders to age in place safely and independently with the resources they need. The budget supports the esteemed programs offered by Executive Office of Elder Affairs, from the Prescription Advantage program that helps elders pay for necessary drugs, to Protective Services that help shield elders from financial and physical abuse. The Committee also recognizes the importance of Councils on Aging that enable elders to have ready access to information about the services available to them, as it is through these programs that elders can achieve community and independent living.

- Provided \$7.9M for Grants to Councils on Aging to maintain local services for elders.
- Provided \$45.8M for Enhanced Home Care Services to maintain services at the FY11 level so that elders who are eligible for care in nursing homes can age in place and remain independent.
- Provided \$97.8M for Home Care Purchased Services so that elders are able to get the services they need to remain in their communities.
- Provided \$4M for Supportive Senior Housing to assist low-income and disabled elders 24/7 in an independent setting.
- Provided \$15.3M for Elder Protective Services to maintain the protection of elders against physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.
- Provided \$6.3M for the Elder Nutrition Program, which provides 8 million meals per year.

Housing

The Committee's recommendation shows continued attention to the Commonwealth's preventative measures to limit and avoid homelessness. The current economic climate has brought the number of those seeking shelter to extremely high levels and the Committee is pleased to direct funds toward programs designed to better serve those seeking shelter in a more efficient and cost effective way. Proudly, the Committee has continued to fund the emergency family shelters and the individual shelters to continue to provide options to those in dire situations. There has been a shift in this area of humanitarian aid from providing shelter to providing housing first. The Committee has embraced this mindset and has made efforts in this budget to reflect the adoption of this new approach to housing those in need.

- Provided \$36M to Massachusetts rental voucher program.
- Provided \$3.4M to alternative rental voucher assistance.
- Provided \$97M for emergency assistance family shelters to continue to provide housing services to those seeking shelter while supporting new congregate family shelter programs and those seeking refuge from dire circumstances.
- Provided \$1.2M for the home and healthy for good program.

- Provided \$38.5M for the short-term housing stabilization program to rapidly re-house families in an efficient and cost effective manner which will move families toward a more sustainable living situation.

Labor

While the Commonwealth's unemployment rate is lower than the national average, the Committee recognizes the importance of continuing to support the workforce and its expansion during a slow rebound from the recession. Being without a job or struggling to grow a business in this environment can be extremely stressful. The Department of Labor oversees invaluable programs available for, and working on behalf of, companies and individuals residing in the Commonwealth to help businesses build their infrastructure, compete for manufacturing contracts and help train employees. The Committee also sees the importance in supporting those programs designed to help the unemployed search for new jobs and grants for employers to help train employees. In addition, the Committee is determined to protect the workforce once jobs are attained by providing adequate funding for programs like the Division of Industrial Accidents and the Division of Occupational Safety.

- Provided \$325K for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership to help small and medium sized business compete for contracts and expand their activity.
- Provided \$750K for individual training grants to allow for training grants to employers, employer groups, and labor organizations.
- Provided \$4.9M to the One Stop Career Centers.
- Provided \$19.1M to the Division of Industrial Accidents to operate the Commonwealth's workers compensation program.
- Provided \$2M to the Division of Occupational Safety.

Economic Development

The office of economic development is supporting and expanding the quality of life for citizens by funding programs that promote the recruitment, expansion and retention of business operations in the Commonwealth while also promoting the Commonwealth as a vacation destination. As the Massachusetts economy slowly rebounds from the national recession the Committee believes it is imperative that the Commonwealth remains an attractive place to visit as well as a place where businesses can grow and expand. Massachusetts is a historic state with attractions from Cape Cod all the way to the Berkshires and the Committee sees the potential return in dedicating funding to those programs that help share everything the state has to offer with others.

- Provided \$704K for the Small Business Development Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- Provided \$1.7M to the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism.
- Provided \$100K to the Massachusetts International Trade Council, which attracts businesses from overseas to come to the Commonwealth.
- Provided \$3.5M to the Commonwealth Zoological Corporation, \$750K of which will be matched by private donations.
- Provided \$300K to the Massachusetts Sports and Entertainment Commission.

Business Regulation

The Committee has continued to fund the departments within the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation at adequate levels to ensure fairness in major sectors of the marketplace. Providing sufficient funding ensures that the industries will be fairly regulated which in turn allows a fair and safe business environment. The enforcement of fair regulations goes hand in hand with the education of consumers as to what they should expect and beware of in their daily business environment. The

Committee reflects the importance of these programs by providing the necessary resources to effectively monitor specific economic activity.

- Provided \$13.2M for the Division of Banks.
- Provided \$11.7M for the Division of Insurance.
- Provided \$160K to the Division of Standards item pricing account to help ensure products are properly priced in stores.
- Provided \$2.7M to the Department of Telecommunications and Cable.

Veterans Affairs

The proposed budget shows the state's unwavering gratitude to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces that defend our Commonwealth and the nation every day around the world. This budget shows a continuation of funding for critical programs that serve veterans once they return from service. Funded through this budget are adequate amounts for veterans outreach, cash and annuity benefits, and funding for the two soldiers' homes that will continue to house and provide medical assistance to servicemen and women returning home.

- Fully funded both the annuity payments for veterans as well as the cash assistance programs.
- Provided \$1.7M for veterans' outreach programs and \$50K for women veterans' outreach.
- Continued funding for the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans.
- Provided a combined \$45M for the Soldiers' Homes in Chelsea and Holyoke.

Public Safety & Homeland Security

Despite the continuing recession, the Committee has continued its dedication to ensuring the safety of the citizens of the Commonwealth. The Committee's recommendations provide funding for the core programs and functions of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Homeland Security and the state's 14 sheriffs. The recommendation includes an initiative to dedicate funding for a new state police class of 150 troopers, thus maintaining the Commonwealth's high quality of law enforcement. This budget also provides the necessary resources for the state to respond effectively to public safety and homeland security hazards as well as other disasters that threaten the stability of the Commonwealth. The final recommendations reflect the difficult decisions that were necessary to produce a balanced budget while also offering strategic increases in areas needing investment.

- Provided funding for a State Police Class for FY12.
- Provided \$226.7M in funding for the Department of the State Police.
- Provided \$1.36M to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency and maintains level funding for nuclear safety and response programs within the department.
- Maintained level funding of \$550K for the Department of Correction's Recidivism Initiative.
- Provided \$2.5M for the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services to ensure efficient turnaround times for criminal background requests in the wake of CORI reform.
- Increased funding for National Guard and Tuition Waivers by \$250K to support our state's active service members.
- Maintained funding for protecting witnesses during investigations and prosecutions.
- Continued to provide funding for the distribution of sexual assault kits to emergency rooms of local hospitals.
- Provided \$472M in funding for the state's 14 sheriff departments.